

Sunday November 15, 2020

Sometimes we listen to the readings during Mass and we may not understand them until Fr. Bob explains them to us in his homily. Father often uses a story to give us an example of what God is expecting from us. That is what we are going to do in this lesson today.

On this Sunday the readings ask what are your gifts or talents? Even as young as you each are, you know what you are good at or what you really like to do. Could be soccer, maybe math, or drawing or painting. We are asked to share gifts, use our gifts, not hide or bury them. Maybe you like math, but you are not the smartest in the class. Don't hide and not let others see how much you like it. Help someone in your class who has a hard time understanding math. Maybe you are not the best soccer player, but you love playing it. Do your best when you are on the field, cheer your teammates when you are on the bench and just try your hardest. You may love drawing or coloring use this gift to make cards for older people or pictures for your friends to hang on their walls. By sharing your gifts, you are giving to others.

The following is a story you may have heard before, but this is the St. Bernard Parish version of "Stone Soup" adapted just for you.

On Friday November 6<sup>th</sup> as Sr. Margie was leaving the rectory a stranger with a very large backpack approached her. He explained that he was traveling through Cincinnati and because of covid19 he did not want to stay inside. He had everything that he needed to camp out and wondered if he could camp out here near the convent. Sr. Margie agreed and told him to contact Dave if he wanted to use the Convent shower.

On Sunday morning Sr. Margie was surprised when the stranger came into church for Mass and even more surprised when he asked to speak at the end of Mass. He said he wanted to thank Sr. Margie for her generosity by making a pot of his special soup. He held up a very unusual looking stone. This he told them was his special secret ingredient. He asked everyone in the parish to come and have a bowl of soup after Mass the following Sunday.

Now the adults in the parish were too busy thinking about the spreading covid19 virus and the tensions over the recent Presidential election and their

disagreements with each other over it. So most of them paid little attention to his invitation. This was very unusual because St. Bernard Parish is known as a welcoming, caring community.

However, some of the children were very curious about a soup that was made using a stone and couldn't stop thinking about it. Chad remembered his older brother's stories about Scout camp and how much wood was needed for the campfire. He remembered the wood from some fallen branches stacked in the backyard. Chad convinced his oldest brother to drive him in a car with a trunk filled with firewood down to the stranger. When Dave saw them deliver all that wood, he offered the use of his fireplace to replace the stranger's camp stove and also a big soup pot from the Shappelle Center. Now James had also been thinking about the soup. He knew his Grandma was a great cook who always used a big soup bone to flavor her soups. James was sure that she would have one and be willing to give it to him and together they would take it to the stranger. While James was doing that, Harmony was asking her grandmother if she could go check their neighbor's garden to see what was left in it. After asking Rob and Carol's permission, Harmony dug up the last of the carrots. After she washed them off she asked her grandpa for a ride down to church.

When Steph's grandkids heard him talking to Margaret about the stone soup they wanted to help. They asked their parents if they could have some potatoes and then their Grandpa could take them down for the stranger's soup.

All week long other kids were asking their parents or grandparents for vegetables. Stormy knew her Grandma had 2 heads of cabbage, so she thought she would ask for 1 for the soup at the church. Gabriel knew that one of his four siblings would walk him to St. Bernard's if he asked for some ears of corn from the freezer. Monroe's mom just brought home some fresh green beans and if she asked nicely she was sure she could get some for the soup. And she was right. Jessie had also been thinking about the stranger at Mass. She was sure that either her brother or sister would walk her up to church if her parents allowed her to take some of their tomatoes. When she was arriving at work on Thursday, Linda saw the stranger stirring something in the big soup pot. Since it was a much cooler morning, she grabbed a blanket that she had made knowing he could throw it around his shoulders until the day warmed up.

On Saturday, November 14, the stranger used the Convent kitchen to wash and

cut the vegetables that the kids had so generously brought to him. He added these to the bone and stone that had been cooking in the soup pot since Thursday.

Sunday morning when the St. Bernard community members arrived for Mass, the aroma of something delicious cooking filled the parking lot. By the end of Mass everyone, adults and children, were hungry for a taste of that soup. Once again the stranger came to Mass and once again when it was over he asked to speak. He said that he would be moving on Monday morning. But before he left, he had to thank the community for their generosity in sharing so much with him. Many of the adults were a little puzzled, because they were still not talking to each other very much. As everyone was walking out of church they noticed that chairs were set up around the Convent yard, but more than that they were surrounded by the delicious aroma of the stone soup. How could a stone make a soup that was smelling so GOOD? They were about to find out!!

The stranger stood stirring the enormous pot. Bowls and spoons were set up on a table along with cups and the tea and lemonade that Dave and Sr. Margie had made. Fr. Bob and Sr. Margie were first in line with others lining up safely distancing. After everyone had been served and seated, someone yelled out--what makes this soup so delicious? Generosity and love was his answer. All week long your children or grandchildren have been coming one by one to bring me something they thought I might need for my soup. That is why this is the best Stone Soup I have ever made. You have taught these children to be caring and loving. Their willingness to share is a wonderful example of this. The community began laughing, talking while social distancing and forgetting about their differences and remembering their love and respect for each other. Everyone left with a full stomach and a full heart because they were once again sharing together.

This story while made up, teaches us several lessons. No matter how small you think your gift is, it should still be shared. When we work together, we are stronger than when we try to do it alone and sometimes like the soup it becomes so much better. Ask God to help you recognize your gifts, use your gifts and share your gifts. So get cooking on finding your gifts and stirring them up to make them even stronger.

You probably recognized the names of some adults from our community, but for safety reasons the correct names of the children were not used. However, you are all very important to this story. This is the code: the first 2 letters were used along with some hints; or a similar name may be substituted for yours (ex. Same meaning Flash for Speedy). Hope you were able to find out what you shared.

**A few questions for you:**

- Who is the stranger in this story? Give him a name.
- How do you share your gifts with others?
- Who would you like to pray for this week? Praying for others is also a gift to them.



**Some of the Church "elders"  
supervise the cooking of  
St. Bernard's Stone Soup!**